

Contents:

Fasting the 9th and 10th of Muharram as Preservation of Identity	3
The Levels Of Fasting	5
Unauthentic Matters Regarding ‘Āshūrā	6
The Reward	6
Training Our Children to Fast on the Day of ‘Āshūrā	7

Fasting the 9th and 10th of Muharram as Preservation of Identity

Mingling with the Rāfidah and lack of teaching of Tauhīd in our Masājīd, combined with interfaith, created a confused generation of youth in their 'Āqīdah and in their worship. Similar to what you said, I met a younger brother who was telling me he's going to fast 'Āshūrā. And as he began talking, he said it was because it commemorates the martyrdom of Imām Husayn (radiyAllāhu 'anhu).

That's not why we fast. The Rāfidah have their 'Āshurā, and we Ahlus Sunnah have our 'Āshurā. The only commonality between our 'Āshurā and their 'Āshurā is the name. That's the only thing that's similar. Everything else is different. So you will understand it better: linguistically, 'Āshurā comes from 'āsharah, the number - the number 10. It's derived from the number 10. To us, Ahlul Sunnah wal-Jamā'ah, its Shar'ī meaning is that it's the 10th day - 'Āshurā from 10 - the 10th day of the first month of the Islamic calendar, the month of Muharram. It's the day we celebrate because it commemorates the day Allah rescued Mūsā 'alayhi-s-Salām and Banī Isrā'īl from Fir'awn. Again, we celebrate it because it commemorates the day Allah rescued Mūsā 'alayhi-s-Salām from Fir'awn - him and his people.

The Rāfidah's version to it is that they claim that Al-Husayn radiyAllāhu 'anhu was killed on that day and they like to revive that memory by beating themselves with chains and slashing their kids' foreheads and their foreheads and hitting their chest and backs with chains. You know, this foolish stuff you see every year. Our 'Āshurā, again, commemorates the rescue of Mūsā 'alayhi-s-Salām, from Fir'awn and his people and the destruction of Fir'awn and his army. Ibn Kathir did say in documenting in his book, Al-Bidaya wa Nihaya, that Al-Husayn radiyAllāhu 'anhu, our beloved, died on Friday, the 10th day of Muharram. Yes, on this day, 61 years after the Hijrah. We love him dearly. He's the grandson of our beloved Messenger ﷺ, the master of the youth in Jannah. But we don't innovate to commemorate the remembrance of his death or martyrdom. What the Rāfidah do is really not to commemorate his martyrdom, but to commemorate and revive the hatred of Ahl al-Sunnah in their hearts and in their children's hearts every year. Because they accuse Ahl al-Sunnah of killing Husayn, not knowing – or not wanting to know – that we love him more than they do. If they were sincere, why don't they do the same to commemorate Husayn's father's martyrdom, who is better than him, and who was killed by Ibn Muljam al-Himyari? His father was killed too.

Or take it a step further. Why don't they beat themselves to commemorate Husayn's grandfather, our beloved Muhammad ﷺ the best man to walk on the face of this earth, who died from the effect of the poison of the Jewish woman in Khaybar, who poisoned him, as he told 'Ā'ishah on his deathbed. He told 'Ā'ishah radiyAllāhu 'anha: „*I still feel the pain caused by the food I ate at Khaybar.*“¹ If they were genuine, why don't they do the same for Husayn's father and grandfather, who are better than him? Because they're not sincere. The reason they're doing it is to revive hatred of Ahl al-Sunnah. Now, our version: we say it's because Allah saved Mūsā 'alayhi-s-Salām.

In the Sahīhayn, Ibn 'Abbās radiyAllāhu 'anhu reported that the Prophet ﷺ when he went to Madīnah, found the Jews fasting on the day of 'Āshūrā. He asked: „*Why do you fast on this day?*“ They responded and told him: „*Allah saved Mūsā and his tribes from the enemies, which is Fir'awn. So we fast on this day to commemorate that victory.*“ The Prophet ﷺ said: „*We have more right to Mūsā than you do.*“² We love Mūsā more than they do.

So the Prophet ﷺ said it, and he ordered the believers to fast on that day. That's for the 10th day. That's our target day. That's the special day. That's why we call it 'Āshūrā - from the number 10. But why do we fast on the 9th? We should fast the 9th as well. In the 10th year of the Hijrah and you know the 10th year is the year before the Prophet ﷺ died. The Prophet ﷺ died in the 11th year.

In the 10th year, Ibn 'Abbās radiyAllāhu 'anhu brought something to the attention of the Prophet ﷺ. He said that the Jews and Christians honored the 10th day of Muharram. So the Prophet ﷺ immediately said: „*When the following year comes, Allah willing, we are going to add to it the 9th.*“³ We're going to also fast the 9th. However, this was the 10th year of the Hijrah. The Prophet ﷺ died before the following year. He wanted to fast the 9th day. Why? To be different from the Jews and Christians, and even the Quraysh.

Because in another Hadīth that's authentic in al-Bukhārī, even the Quraysh considered that day sacred and fasted on that day. We've said many times - and I told you recently - that I compiled nearly all the authentic Hadīth in which the Prophet ﷺ ordered us to be different from other faiths in various aspects. It's a trend and a principle he established. I compiled over 45 Hadīth. The purpose is to be distinct and to preserve our identity.

¹ Sahīh Bukhārī 4428

² Sunan Ibn Majah 1734

³ Sunan Abī Dāwūd 2445

Now the Prophet ﷺ died while only fasting the tenth. He only fasted the tenth; he never lived ﷺ to fast the ninth. But it was clear and authentic that he would have fasted if he lived until the next year. Why? To be different from the Jews and Christians, and also the Quraysh, who used to do that. Since he stated that he would have fasted it if he lived, he established that rule and the Sahābah understood that this was the Sunnah, and it was what they followed after him.

The Levels Of Fasting

Which brings us to the next issue: the levels of fasting 'Āshūrā. There are four levels. We start with the best and go to the least. The best form of fasting 'Āshūrā is to fast the 9th and the 10th. The 10th is the target date because the Prophet ﷺ said: *„If I live until next year, I will fast the ninth day (of Muharram) too.“*⁴ And this is what the Sahābah did, as documented by Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Umar radiyAllāhu 'anhum.

The second level of fasting is to fast the 10th and the 11th. That's slightly lower in ranking than the first because the Prophet ﷺ said the 9th and the 10th, but maybe someone wasn't able to fast the 9th. He can go on and fast the 10th and the 11th. That way, he combines hitting the target day of the 10th, the day of 'Āshūrā, and adds a day after to be different. But it isn't the same day that the Prophet ﷺ specified.

The third level of fasting is to just fast the 10th day. That's less than the first and second levels. It's acceptable, but carries less reward than fasting the first and second levels.

The fourth level is to fast the 9th, 10th, and 11th, all three days together. It's considered less because the Prophet ﷺ suggested fasting the 9th and the 10th. He didn't suggest all three days. If one adds the 11th day to fasting with the intention of it being for 'Āshūrā, it drops down to the fourth level. If he intended the 11th day of Muharram to be just a regular, general day, that's totally different. Why is it considered less when fasting all three days? Because there is no authentic proof to fast all three days with the intention of it being 'Āshūrā.

And note, when I say there's no authentic proof, I'm specific in my choice of words. There may be narrations, but they're not authentic. So it's not proven by an authentic Hadīth, nor do we actually know of any Sahābī who fasted all three days with the intention of 'Āshūrā. Fasting all three days was narrated

⁴ Sunan Ibn Majah 1736

by Ibn Shaybah that Tawūs did it. And Tawūs is a Tābi‘, not a Sahābī. He fasted all three days. But when you look deeper into it, some of the Tābi‘īn fasted the three days because they feared missing the day of 'Āshūrā due to issues with moon sighting. They weren't sure, so they decided to fast all three days so they wouldn't miss the day of 'Āshūrā. If that happens in your community with a similar issue, then that's totally different.

Unauthentic Matters Regarding 'Āshūrā

Also keep in mind, there is nothing in the authentic Sunnah, and Imam Ahmad specifically stated this, about giving gifts to your kids on this day. Nor is there anything authentic regarding wearing special clothes, putting on perfume, or using kohl, like some people do or say. If you want to do these things as a habit on a regular day, you may, but not with the intention of 'Āshūrā. There is nothing to back it up from the Sunnah. For example, on Jumu'ah we have proof that says to wear special clothes and to put on perfume, and if you do that with the intention of obedience to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, you will be rewarded. But there is nothing like that on 'Āshūrā. And when I say perfume, it is always for men when they go outside.

The Reward

The next important thing - and the most important- is: what is the reward, what is the significance of fasting the 10th day? What do I get? The 10th day this year will be, In shaa Allah, on Thursday⁵, so you will fast on Wednesday to be different, and the target day of 'Āshūrā, which is the 10th, will be on Thursday. No matter what, don't miss the 10th. Try to add the 9th, but no matter what, don't miss the 10th. These days, Iftar is at 5:15 PM, that's when you have dinner. Someone wise will take advantage of these short days for fasting, especially on a very special day like 'Āshūrā. The days are so short that you don't even feel like you've fasted. Maghrib time comes at around 5:15 PM, and you're not even hungry or thirsty. I know brothers they have told me that in places like Australia, the days are still long. But of course, In shaa Allah, they will still fast. Over here, though, Maghrib is at 5:15 PM. If you're not fasting on the day of 'Āshūrā or on extra days, you're really missing out on great rewards from Allah. You have no excuse not to fast this 'Āshūrā and additional days in the future while the days are so short.

⁵ This does not refer to the current year

In Sahih Muslim, the Prophet ﷺ said: „Fasting the day of 'Āshūrā is expiation for the sins committed in the previous year.“⁶ Your sins of the entire previous year will be forgiven, In shaa Allah.

Training Our Children to Fast on the Day of 'Āshūrā

'Āshūrā is among the holiest days because not only was it the day that Allah subhānahu wa ta'ālā rescued Mūsā 'alayhi-s-Salām from Fir'awn, but 'Āshūrā was also an obligatory day of fasting before Ramadān.

In both Bukhari and Muslim, where Ramadan was ordained, the Prophet ﷺ said: „'Āshūrā is no longer obligatory.“⁷ If you want to fast it, you can; if you don't want to fast, you don't have to. It became Sunnah. It was so essential that they trained their kids, their little kids, to fast it. Ar-Rubayyi' bint Mu'āwwidh bin 'Afrā' said the Prophet ﷺ on the tenth day of Muharram would send a messenger to the towns and say: „On this day, continue fasting if you fast, and if you didn't fast, hold off from eating and drinking.“ She said: „We used to have our kids fast, and when they would cry, we'd give them toys to play with.“ It was so important that they trained their kids to fast, and it was so important that if they didn't fast in respect of it, they would hold off from eating and drinking.

Finally, the day of 'Āshūrā is a day of victory. It commemorates a day of victory and brings hope to this Ummah in the miserable state that we're in. The day of 'Āshūrā, the day of Mūsā, started off like our days today, dark days where Muslims are humiliated, raped, killed, and low, with many howling, unleashed Ruwaybidah running around all over, saying everything you can imagine. The people thought it was over. They told Mūsā 'alayhi-s-Salām:

إِنَّا لَمَذْرُكُونَ

“Indeed, we are to be overtaken!”

[26:61]

Mūsā were doomed.

Mūsā 'alayhi-s-Salām said:

كَلَّا إِنَّ مَعِيَ رَبِّي سَيَهْدِينِ

“No! Indeed, with me is my Lord; He will guide me.”

[26:62]

⁶ Sunan Ibn Majah 1738

⁷ Sahih Bukhārī 4504

No, no, my Lord is with me, He's gonna give me victory. He's gonna guide me.

فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ أَنْ أَضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْبَحْرَ فَانْفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيمِ

„Then We inspired to Mūsā: ‘Strike with your staff the sea.’“

[26:63]

And it separated and it parted, and each separate part became like a huge mountain. They thought it was the end, but it wasn't. Look what Allah said about that day, that promised day of 'Āshūrā:

وَنُرِيدُ أَنْ نَمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اسْتُضِعُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ أَئِمَّةً وَنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوَارِثِينَ وَنُكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَنُرِيَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَجُنُودَهُمَا مِنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَحْذَرُونَ

“And We wanted to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors. And establish them in the land and show Pharaoh and [his minister] Hāmān and their soldiers through them that which they had feared.”

[28:5-6]

May Allah subhānahu wa ta'ālā make this Ummah the rulers, the inheritors, establish us on this earth, and show the Fir'awns - the many Fir'awns - and Hamans of today the humility He showed the Fir'awns and Hamans of Mūsā 'alayhi-s-Salām.